



# Mc Dougall's Good Stories for Children



## The Tale of the Destruction of the Glossary, a Bird Which Robbed the Pantries and Got Many Boys Into Serious Trouble

I HAVE just learned the facts about Arthur Leslie's adventure with that wonderful creature called the Glossary, and must hasten to relate them to you. Arthur is a small but studious boy, who lived near me, and of whom I am very fond. Arthur was a good boy, but he had one fault. He was often very greedy. This fault he tried hard to conquer and succeeded generally, but now and then he fell a victim to it. But, after all, I suppose if he had been like you or me, and not possessed with a desire to eat all that he saw, the adventure would never have happened, and perhaps you would have had no story to-day.

One morning his mother cooked a big panful of the loveliest crullers ever seen and she gave Arthur four, after which she placed them to cool in the pantry and went to the grocer's.

Now, as she had not told her son not to eat any more, although he knew very well that was what she intended to do, he felt less inclined to choke down the feeling of intense greed that overcame him, and after a time he ate two more of the delicious crullers. Then, feeling that he might as well be punished for a big fault as for a small one, which is a very foolish argument, he proceeded to eat cruller after cruller, until, astonishing as it may seem to you, he had eaten every one, and as they were not counted, nobody can more than guess at their number.

He felt awfully full of guilt and crullers, and when he realized what he had done he hurried to his room to reflect upon the sad feelings of his brothers and sisters when they heard of his deed and the loss of all the crullers. When, after a long time, he heard his mother's scream of amazement, he braced himself for a shock, but none came. At supper time his mother related to all of the family the story of the disappearance of the crullers, and although Sadie and Bill looked very suspiciously at Arthur, she added:

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"No, it was not your brother. In the first place, no boy could hold so many crullers, and in the second place, I was not absent long enough for a mere boy to get away with them. It must have been several boys at once, I am sure."

"Perhaps it was the Glossary," said Mr. Leslie. "He hasn't been heard of for some years around here."

"What's the Glossary?" asked all three of the children at once.

"It is a strange animal that has the wonderful power of squeezing himself through the very narrowest cracks, it seems (for it is impossible that he can open doors or windows, although he may go through small apertures like a keyhole, I believe), and eating doughnuts, cakes and pies wherever he finds them, especially hot ones, the hotter the better apparently. He gobbles them up instantly, and many a boy has been punished for eating crullers or cookies which really were made away with by the sneaking, foxy old Glossary."

"What does it look like?" asked Arthur in awe. "Nobody knows exactly, as no one has ever seen it," replied his father. "I think that's what got your crullers, Ma," he added as he rose to light his pipe.

Arthur went to bed greatly tickled to think how easily he had escaped, but when he fully realized the grief of Sadie and Bill at their loss his heart smote him, and finally he felt so sorry that he could not sleep. Little by little in the darkness the enormity of his fault grew more distinct, and finally, hearing his mother cough, he rose and went to her, and after telling her what he had done, he added:

"I wish," said his mother, with a deep sigh, "that you had waited until morning before telling me. Now I can't sleep."

Arthur was forgiven by his father and mother, but it was a long time before Sadie and Bill relented. They made him feel like a burglar or a sneak-thief every time they cast their reproachful glances at him, and he resolved never to give way to his greed again. What was more, he resolved to search for the Glossary and destroy the creature, for he wished no more boys to be suspected.

Every day he determined to start, but something delayed him until a few days before the Fourth of July he confided his plans to Archie Moorehead, his closest friend, and said:

"To-day I start, right after lunch."

"I'll go with you," said Archie. "I've wanted some fun and yet I hate to miss the Fourth."

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At first Arthur was not willing to take Archie with him, but finally he agreed, provided that Archie should bring along all the firecrackers that he had bought for the Fourth, for he knew they were immensely big ones, and he intended to have a Fourth all by themselves somewhere while they searched for the Glossary.

To this Archie consented, saying that was what he had intended anyway, and when he was ready the two stole away and hurried down the street. They walked for several hours, finding themselves near sunset far out in the country on a lonely roadside and wondering where they would spend their first night away from home. Archie was for sleeping in the grass under a tree, but Arthur was somewhat afraid of the dew. While they were discussing the question along came a cart, and the man driving it asked them to ride with him. When they had told him why they had left home he said:

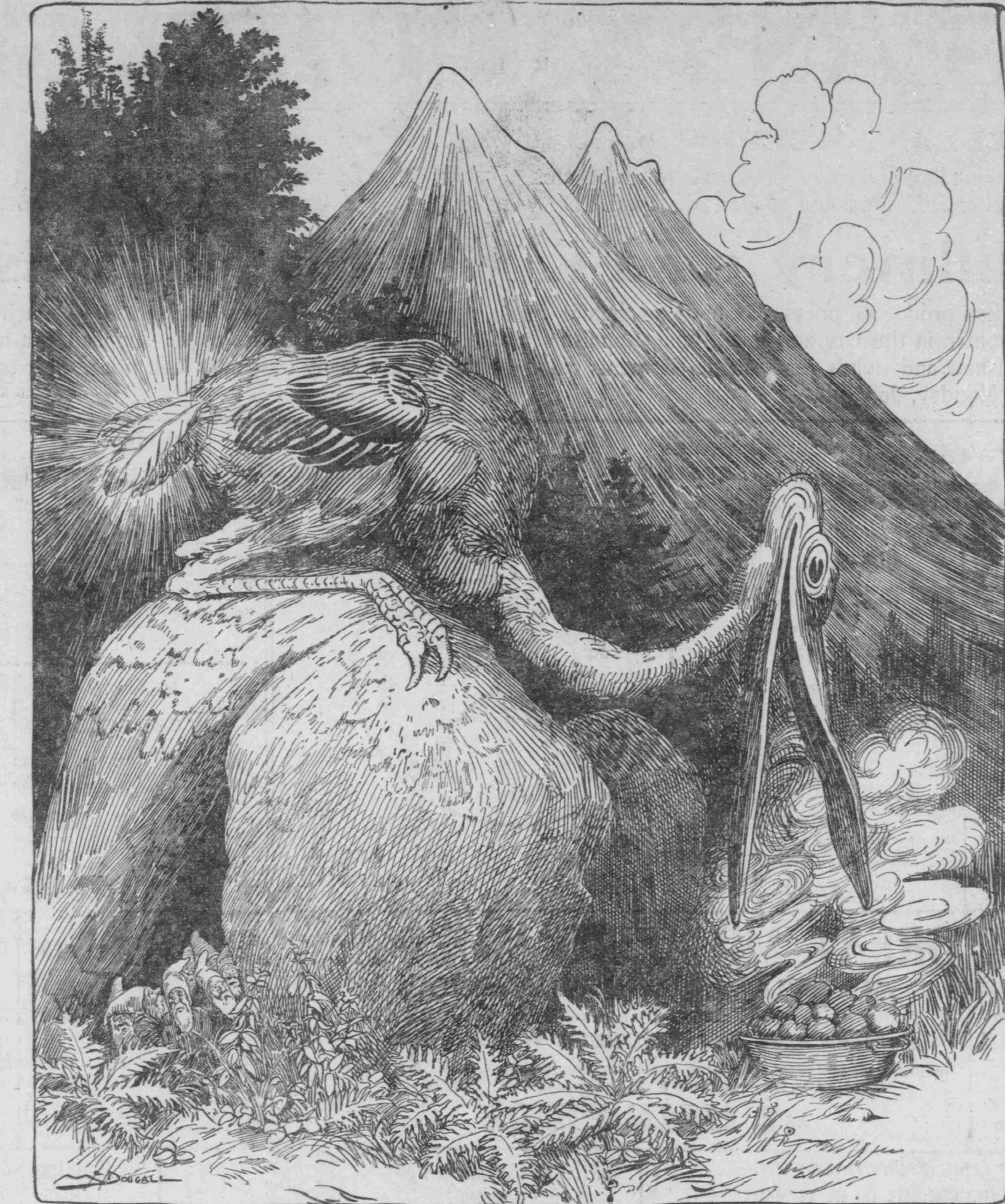
"It's a noble quest and I approve of it. I'll let you sleep at my house to-night."

He took them home, and after supper they went to bed, but Archie then began to worry.

"I have read of strange houses where they get people inside and rob them," said he; "and perhaps this is one."

"I'm not afraid of that," returned Arthur, "for the man looked like a good man; besides I brought old 'Toadsticker' along, and if anyone ventures in here I'll give it to him."

Now "Toadsticker" was an old knife with an iron handle, all covered with strange marks like bird-tracks; a knife more fitted for opening clams or oysters than for anything else, which had once belonged to an old soldier who worked for Mr. Leslie. He had found it in Europe, and had treasured it on account of its queer appearance, but nobody had ever considered it of any value, so Arthur carried it when on his excursions, and like an ancient



THE HUNGRY GLOSSARY EATING THE DEADLY DOUGHNUTS

knight he gave his weapon a name to distinguish it from others.

He kept "Toadsticker" in his hand, but soon both boys sank into slumber and never woke until the farmer's wife called them to breakfast.

They started out ready for any adventures after breakfast and marched along merrily, meeting few people and learning nothing from them regarding the haunts or the habits of the Glossary, and finally when night came they were far from any house, so they were compelled to sleep under a tree.

In the morning a wood-cutter passing by woke them and told them to take another road, which would lead them to a canal where they might engage passage on a boat. This was a pleasant prospect, and they followed the man's advice, coming to the canal sooner than they expected.

They waited until nearly noon before a boat came along, and great was the surprise of the canalers to see boys away out in that deserted place. They took them on board, but when they found that they had but thirty-seven cents between them they were wroth and called the boys hard names. Then they made them get out and drive the horses in turn, so that after all they might as well have walked, only, of course, one got a little rest while the other drove. When they arrived after several days at the city of Myopia, in a distant land, they soon saw a chance to slip away, and you may be sure they took it.

They were in a funny place, this city of Myopia, where all the people were cross-eyed, so that all the streets were made crooked and all the houses bent, and the signs all so twisted that an ordinary person could scarcely read them, but everything was perfectly plain to the cross-eyed citizens, of course. It made them stagger to walk along the crooked streets, one minute in the roadway, the next up against the houses on the sidewalk, and they made slow progress through the city, but finally they reached its outskirts and sat down to rest under some strange fruit trees.

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Here a man and woman passing stopped to ask the boys where they came from, and finding them from a far distant land, took them home to supper, which was composed entirely of pickles and cheese. The boys were nearly famished, for the canalers had not given them much to eat, you may be sure, and so they gladly ate their share. Then all sat on the porch, and the man told them all that he knew about the Glossary. He said:

"Many years have passed since the Glossary was seen in this region. Even when I was a small boy it was only a memory, and the very oldest people could hardly remember when it had visited us. But once upon a time, long ago, no place was more often annoyed by it, and no housewife could say with certainty that her children would eat the pies, cakes and things that she cooked, for the Glossary was ever

hovering about, and it was rare that he missed a chance. Pickles, preserves, jelly, tarts, ice cream, candy, custard and sometimes even plain bread or biscuits were gobbled up almost as soon as a woman turned her back."

Although this man knew all about the ancient history of the Glossary, he couldn't tell them where to find the animal at present. However, he introduced them to another man who said that it might be found somewhere on the other side of the desert of Skeetschustkivitschty (which you must ask your father how to pronounce, as I cannot tell you), and he also thought that they might get a chance to cross the desert at once, as a friend of his was taking a herd of camels across. The boys went with this man to the camel driver, who consented to allow them to ride on his beasts across the desert with the grumpy name, and added that they had better pack up their things at once, for he wished to start at noon when the wind was down.

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As they had nothing to pack they just sat around until he was ready, and then, each mounting a big, awkward camel, off they went. Arthur always said afterward that the feeling of riding a camel was like being swung in a hammock by another fellow while somebody bumped you from underneath. It was not pleasant, but it beat walking, and nobody could walk across the desert of what's-its-name.

The journey took three days, and long before they had crossed the sandy waste they were very much bored, indeed. And tired! Well, you sit on a log for a whole day while the other boys roll it, and you will learn how it feels to ride a camel! I have tried it and so I know all about it.

On the opposite side of the desert was an immense forest, the depths of which had been penetrated by but a few adventurous men, and all manner of wild beasts were said to inhabit it, as well as ferocious tribes of savages, but on inquiry Arthur could find nobody who had ever really seen any of these things. In fact, the forest had had a bad reputation for many centuries, but no one had ever investigated the stories of wild men and animals at all.

The boys concluded that they would endeavor to pass through the wild woods, and at any rate venture deep into their recesses, for if the Glossary was likely to hide anywhere it would be in just such a dark, forbidding forest.

So they started off into the woods early in the morning, and soon were completely buried among the mossy old trees and gigantic ferns that grew everywhere. They saw no animals, and even birds were scarce in the dim forest aisles through which they went so cautiously at first, but soon, regaining all their courage, without fear or care.

Day after day they sought for the inhabitants, but never found even a hut to show that men dwelt

in the dark forest, and finally Arthur said that it was time to go home, for school would open pretty soon. Archie was quite willing to let school slide and stay right there for the rest of his life, but Arthur knew that a boy without study is but half a boy and will never make a whole man.

So, taking a course straight to the west, they marched, and growing tired in the afternoon they sat down beside a great pile of gray, moss-covered rock. Arthur proposed a game of "mumble-peg" immediately, and taking "Toadsticker" from his belt he tossed it into the air to decide who would have first throw. It fell with a loud clang against the rock and instantly the boys heard a faint outcry, seeming to come from beneath their feet. Springing up in some alarm as the sound grew louder in another moment, they stood listening. At their feet the rock suddenly opened noiselessly, and while they stared into the black hole out came a troop of little men, headed by a graybeard clad in red leather. He made a polite bow and said:

"Welcome, oh Master of the magic knife! What is your wish?"

"What do you mean?" asked Arthur, much amazed. "You have summoned the gnomes," replied the old elf, "and we are here in obedience to the summons."

"I didn't summon you!" stammered Arthur. "You struck the magic knife upon the rock," replied the gnome, "and I, the king of the gnomes, must obey it."

"Is 'Toadsticker' a magic knife?" gasped Arthur. "The name of the knife is not 'Toadsticker' or anything as common as that!" said the gnome king. "It's name is Hairsplitter, and it is the weapon of Odin."

"Are those marks like hen's-foot runes?" asked Arthur. "I never knew what runes were."

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"They are magic words carved by Eric Swartbeard, the Norseman and a great wizard, two thousand years since, and magic runes compel obedience of all under the sway of the knife. Whatever you wish can be accomplished by waving the knife."

"Are you sure?" asked Arthur. "It's as certain as anything," replied the gnome king. "All right, then," cried the boy, seizing "Toadsticker" or Hairsplitter, as the gnome called it, and briskly waving the knife: "I wish for an automobile at once and a good road to take us out of the woods!"

The gnomes all looked around anxiously, for, of course, elves several thousands of years behind the times didn't know what an automobile was, and all waited in silence for several minutes. Then Arthur said:

"I don't believe your old-fashioned magic will work nowadays! You see I get no answer at all!"

## How One Boy Who Was Not Wrongly Suspected Searched for It, Found and Killed It and Then Became Very Wealthy

The gnome began to weep silently but bitterly. "Alas!" said he, "we are undone by some adverse power. Once a shake of that knife would bring thunderbolts down upon the head of Odin's enemies!"

"What do you care?" asked Arthur. "You won't have to hustle around and obey it any longer. I'm glad it brought you all out, for I've never seen a gnome and, in fact, I didn't believe there were any of you left."

The gnome laughed as he replied:

"Few people have ever seen us, and without the knife you would never have discovered us, although we have often heard you at night above us. Why are you in the forest?"

"We are seeking a beast called the Glossary. Have you ever seen it?"

"The Glossary is a bird, not a beast," replied the gnome king. "Have I ever seen it?" he asked, turning to his companions.

They shouted in sarcastic tones: "Have we ever seen the Glossary! Well! Well!"

Arthur looked at them in surprise. The gnome king added:

"My dear boy, if you had seen the bird as often as we you would know every feather on him. He is our persecutor, for he has roosted nightly on top of this very rock for years, thus preventing us from going abroad, for gnomes are the only living things that he will eat. He is fonder of a young tender gnome than of mince pie."

Arthur was delighted. "What is he like?" he asked. "Describe him to us. How big is he?"

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"As tall as yonder fir-tree!" said the gnome, pointing to a sapling twenty feet high. "He can flatten himself as thin as a sheet of paper and creep through a tiny crack or a keyhole, even when full of doughnuts and cookies, and he has a beak that can twist off shutters and locks, if need be. He can't be pierced by arrows or spears, so he is invulnerable. Moreover, in his tail he has three feathers, one of silver, one of gold and one of some other metal that shines like the sun and lights his way in the darkest gloom."

"I have an idea!" cried Arthur. "I think I know how to settle old Mr. Glossary in a minute. Do you know how to fry doughnuts?" he asked.

"Well, I guess we do!" replied the gnome. "My wife makes the finest in all Gnomerville."

"Well, ask her to get to work right off and cook about fifty or sixty whacking big ones."

The gnome king sent word to his queen, and so brisk are gnomes, the sun was still above the horizon when she came back to say that the doughnuts were about to go into the lard.

When it became quite dark, and the Glossary might be expected to arrive at any moment, the steaming-hot doughnuts were brought out in a huge pan and placed at the foot of the rocks.

Arthur then demanded of Archie his great pack of firecrackers, which he had carefully treasured all this time, not having an opportunity during their travels to hold the expected celebration, and taking them one by one he inserted into each smoking doughnut a cracker, just leaving the fuse sticking out. Then they hid in a great crack of the rocks and waited, but not for long, for in a few minutes they heard a rustling above them and, looking up, saw that the bird had silently flown down upon the rocks and was preening his feathers while he sniffed the air, for the scent of the doughnuts was filling the forest.

Then, as Arthur gazed, the Glossary craned his neck down, peering into the darkness. While he was looking down the other side of the rock Arthur quickly struck a match and lighted several of the giant crackers and then crept far back into the cranny. The Glossary turned his tail and the shining feather lighted up the forest brilliantly, revealing the big pan of hot doughnuts below. With a snort and a grunt the bird sprang down and in a twinkling had swallowed in one gulp every one of them, appreciating exceedingly the special hotness of the sizzling fuses, which he never took time to notice at all.

Just as he reached the top of the rocks the firecrackers began to explode inside of him in a series of muffled reports. Then they sounded like a discharge of cannon in battle, and with one wild squawk he blew up like a bomb. Pieces of the Glossary were scattered through the woods for a half mile, and then a deep silence fell on the darkness.

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Arthur ran out, and there lay the shining feather on the ground. He picked it up and shouted with delight, for he saw that it was made of metal and knew at once that it must be the wonderful substance called Radium, that has just been discovered, continually gives out light and heat without ever wearing out or losing an atom of its weight. It is worth two million dollars per pound, and as the feather surely weighed almost a pound, Arthur realized that his fortune was made.

The gnomes all danced with joy and laughed at Arthur when he showed his gleam at finding a feather worth two millions, for they said they had millions and millions of gold below that they had not the least use for and to which the boys were welcome.

They showed the boys the way through the forest, and Arthur hired the camel man to carry all the gold the gnomes gave him to the sea-shore, where they filled the ship with it. The gnomes gave the boys lots of diamonds, sapphires and rubies, so that they were perhaps the richest boys in the world.

But, after all, Arthur valued the Radium feather above all the gold, for it was the only one on earth and it made him feel famous.

They sailed for home soon, after trying hard to induce the gnome king and queen to accompany them, but they were afraid to do so. Later they did come, all by themselves, and visited Arthur, and sometime I'll tell you what they did and saw. When the boys reached home they found that everybody had thought them dead and had mourned for them, even Sadie and Bill now and then dropping a tear for their lost brother.

I forgot, almost, to say that Arthur gave "Toadsticker" or "Hairsplitter," to the gnome king, so that if there is any more magic in it the king gets the benefit of it; and that's quite right, I think.

WALT MCDUGALL